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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Meeting of the States parties to the
Convention on the Elimination of All
Forms of Discrimination against Women
Eighth meeting
New York, 22 May 1995

REPORT OF THE STATES PARTIES

1. The Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women opened the eighth meeting of the States parties, on 22 May 1995. The meeting elected Mr. Ibrahim A. Gambari (Nigeria) Chairperson of the meeting; and four Vice-Chairpersons (Canada, Japan, Lithuania and Suriname). The meeting adopted the provisional agenda contained in document CEDAW/SP/1995/1.

2. The meting discussed General Assembly decision 49/448 of 23 December 1994, entitled "Consideration of the request for the revision of article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women", in which the Assembly:

> "... on the recommendation of the Third Committee, 1/ aware that the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden have made a written request 2/ for the revision of article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women 3/ by replacing the words 'normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order' by the words 'meet annually for a period necessary', and having noted that article 26 of the Convention stipulates that the General Assembly shall decide upon the steps, if any, to be taken in respect of such a request, decided: (a) to request the States parties to the Convention to consider the request for a revision of article 20, paragraph 1, at the meeting to be convened in 1995; and (b) to request the States parties at the meeting to limit the scope of any revision of the Convention to article 20, paragraph 1, thereof."

3. In response to general recommendation 22, adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its fourteenth session, in which it recommended that the meeting of States parties receive an oral report from the Chairperson of the Committee on the difficulties faced by the Committee in

performing its functions, the meeting, on an exceptional basis, heard a statement by the Chairperson of the Committee, Ms. Ivanka Corti (Italy).

4. Finland introduced a draft resolution on "Proposed amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women", contained in document CEDAW/SP/1995/L.1 on behalf of Australia, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ghana, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Namibia, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, subsequently joined by Armenia, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Ethiopia, Hungary, Israel, Japan, Kenya, Lithuania, Madagascar, New Zealand, Nigeria, Philippines, Samoa, Senegal, Tunisia and Zimbabwe. The draft resolution read as follows:

"The States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

"Recalling General Assembly resolution 49/164 of 23 December 1994 on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

"Noting the proposed revision of article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention by replacing the words 'normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order' by the words 'meet annually for a period necessary' put forward by the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, in accordance with article 26 of the Convention,

"Also noting General Assembly decision 49/448 of 23 December 1994, in which the Assembly, in accordance with article 26, requested the States parties to consider the proposed amendment at the current meeting and to limit the scope of any revision of the Convention to article 20, paragraph 1,

"Reiterating the importance of the Convention as well as the contribution of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the United Nations efforts to eliminate discrimination against women,

"Noting that the workload of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has increased because of the growing number of States parties to the Convention and that the annual session of the Committee is the shortest of all the annual sessions of the human rights treaty bodies,

"Recalling recommendation 22 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its fourteenth session, on the meeting time of the Committee,

"Convinced of the need to adopt measures to enable the Committee to consider in a thorough and timely manner the reports submitted by States parties and to discharge all its responsibilities under the Convention,

"Also convinced that the provision of an adequate amount of time for the meetings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is a vital factor in ensuring the continued effectiveness of the Committee in future years,

"1. Decide to replace in article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, the words 'normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order' by the words 'meet annually';

"2. Recommend that the General Assembly approve this amendment at its fiftieth session;

"3. Decide that the amendment shall enter into force when it has been approved by the General Assembly and accepted by a two-thirds majority of States parties which shall have so notified the Secretary-General as depositary of the Convention."

5. The representative of Finland then informed the States parties that in the spirit of compromise and in order to reach consensus the co-sponsors were ready to accept an amendment offered by Japan to operative paragraph 1 (CEDAW/SP/1995/L.1/Add.1), whereby article 20, paragraph 1, would be amended to read:

"The Committee shall normally meet annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention. The duration of the meetings of the Committee shall be determined by a meeting of the States parties to the present Convention, subject to the approval of the General Assembly."

6. The representative of Finland also suggested that in the seventh preambular paragraph of the draft resolution after the word "Committee", to add the following words ", in accordance with its mandate,".

7. After further discussion it was decided to amend operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of the draft resolution to read as follows:

"2. Recommend that the General Assembly, at its fiftieth session, take note with approval of the amendment;

"3. Decide that the amendment shall enter into force following consideration by the General Assembly and when it has been accepted by a two-thirds majority of States parties which shall have so notified the Secretary-General as depositary."

8. The meeting adopted the draft resolution contained in documents CEDAW/SP/1995/L.1 and CEDAW/SP/1995/L.1/Add.1 as orally revised (see annex).

9. The representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland made a statement after the adoption of the draft resolution.

10. The meeting adopted the present report.

Notes

1/ A/49/607, para. 38.

2/ A/C.3/49/26.

3/ General Assembly resolution 34/180, annex.

ANNEX

Proposed amendment to article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The States parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 49/164 of 23 December 1994 on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Noting the proposed revision of article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention by replacing the words "normally meet for a period of not more than two weeks annually in order" by the words "meet annually for a period necessary" put forward by the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, in accordance with article 26 of the Convention,

Also noting General Assembly decision 49/448 of 23 December 1994, in which the Assembly, in accordance with article 26, requested States parties to consider the proposed amendment at the current meeting and to limit the scope of any revision of the Convention to article 20, paragraph 1,

Reiterating the importance of the Convention as well as the contribution of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to the United Nations efforts to eliminate discrimination against women,

Noting that the workload of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has increased because of the growing number of States parties to the Convention and that the annual session of the Committee is the shortest of all the annual sessions of the human rights treaty bodies,

Recalling recommendation 22 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at its fourteenth session, on the meeting time of the Committee,

Convinced of the need to adopt measures to enable the Committee, in accordance with its mandate, to consider in a thorough and timely manner the reports submitted by States parties and to discharge all its responsibilities under the Convention,

Also convinced that the provision of an adequate amount of time for the meetings of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is a vital factor in ensuring the continued effectiveness of the Committee in future years,

1. Decide to replace article 20, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women with the following text:

"The Committee shall normally meet annually in order to consider the reports submitted in accordance with article 18 of the present Convention.

/...

The duration of the meetings of the Committee shall be determined by a meeting of the States parties to the present Convention, subject to the approval of the General Assembly.";

2. Recommend that the General Assembly, at its fiftieth session, take note with approval of the amendment;

3. Decide that the amendment shall enter into force following consideration by the General Assembly and when it has been accepted by a two-thirds majority of States parties which shall have so notified the Secretary-General as depositary of the Convention.